UNITED NATIONS **A**

General Assembly

Distr.
LIMITED

A/C.2/51/L.36
22 November 1996

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Fifty-first session
SECOND COMMITTEE
Agenda items 97 (f) and 116

ENVIRONMENTAL AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR NATURAL DISASTER REDUCTION

PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1996-1997

International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.2/51/L.4

Statement submitted by the Secretary-General in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly

1. Under the terms of operative paragraphs 10 to 13 of the draft resolution, the General Assembly would:

"Reaffirm that the secretariat of the Decade will continue to serve as the substantive secretariat for the preparation of the closing event of the Decade, working with the full support of relevant bodies of the United Nations Secretariat and drawing on the contributions of the organizations of the United Nations system concerned, other international organizations and Governments (para. 10);

"Request the Secretary-General to ensure the availability of resources for the activities related to the preparation of the closing event of the Decade and to appeal for additional voluntary contributions to the Trust Fund for the Decade (para. 11);

"Also request the Secretary-General to review relationships and responsibilities for natural disaster reduction with respect to the future, and to submit to the General Assembly at its fifty-second session, through the Economic and Social Council, a report on the implementation of the International Framework of Action for the Decade, including concrete proposals for ensuring the distinct performance capability of the secretariat of the Decade, in order to bring the Decade to its successful conclusion by the year 1999 (para. 12);

"Request the secretariat of the Decade to convene, in its capacity as substantive secretariat of the closing event of the Decade, the first meeting of the preparatory committee for the closing event, not later than the special session of the General Assembly to review Agenda 21, and with due recognition of equitable regional representation" (para. 13).

2. The programme of activities in the context of the Decade, including the preparation and holding of the closing event of the Decade, is detailed in the report of the Secretary-General (A/51/186-E/1996/60). The activities fall within the context of subprogramme 2 (Disaster prevention and preparedness) of programme 37 (Emergency humanitarian assistance) of the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997. To the extent that they relate to the biennium 1996-1997, the activities have been programmed in the current programme budget, except for the session of the preparatory committee for the closing event of the Decade to be held in 1997. That session, given the timetable for the budget preparation, has not been foreseen in the 1996-1997 programme budget.

3. It will be recalled that under the terms of General Assembly resolution 44/236, annex, section E, the substantive activities in the context of the Decade, including the secretariat of the Decade itself, are funded exclusively from extrabudgetary resources solicited from donors through the specific trust fund established for the purpose. Therefore, the implementation of paragraphs 10 to 12 of the draft resolution would depend entirely on the amount of the extrabudgetary resources that Member States and other donors would provide for the Decade through the funding mechanism established for the purpose.

4. As to the 1997 session of the preparatory committee for the closing event of the Decade, the related conference-servicing costs would represent a direct charge to the regular budget under section 26E (Conference services). The preparatory committee would have a 5-day session and hold a total of 22 meetings of its plenary and working groups, to be served in all official languages of the Organization. There would be a total of 59 pages of pre-session, in-session and post-session documentation. On the basis of these parameters and on the assumption that the session would take place at Geneva, the conference-servicing requirements of the committee have been estimated at full cost in the amount of $251,100.

5. Given the fact that the 1997 session of the preparatory committee has not been programmed in the United Nations calendar of conferences and meetings, the above costs ($251,100) would represent additional requirements for the 1996-1997 budget under section 26E.

6. In connection with paragraph 5 above, it will be recalled that in adopting the programme budget for 1996-1997, the General Assembly decided that savings of $103.9 million were to be achieved during the biennium. Proposals on how to achieve those savings have been submitted to the General Assembly by the Secretary-General through the Fifth Committee. Therefore, the possibility of accommodating the additional conference-servicing requirements stemming from operative paragraph 13 of the draft resolution will be reviewed by the General Assembly at its current session, taking into account all the relevant reports of the Secretary-General.